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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/676,364	09/29/2000	John D. Roper	MSFT-0207/150500.1	2193

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EXAMINER

CAMPBELL, JOSHUA D

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
2179	

DATE MAILED: 11/02/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	09/676,364	ROPER ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Joshua D Campbell	2179	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 20 September 2004.

2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-32 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
6) Claim(s) 1-32 is/are rejected.
7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) All b) Some * c) None of:
1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6) Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

1. This action is responsive to communications: Request for Continued Examination filed on 09/20/2004.
2. Claims 1-32 are pending in this case. Claims 1, 12, and 23 are independent claims. Claims 1, 6, 12, 17, 23, and 27 have been amended.
3. The rejection of claims 1-5, 12-16 and 23-26 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Kurtzman II et al. has been withdrawn in view of amendments.
4. The rejection of claims 6-11, 17-22, and 27-32 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kurtzman II et al. in view of Langheinrich et al. has been withdrawn in view of amendments.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

5. The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.

Claims 1-32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kurtzman, II et al. (US Patent Number 6,144,944, filed on April 22, 1998) in view of Langheinrich et al. (US Patent Number 6,654,725, filed November 9, 1999).

6. **Regarding independent claim 1,**
 - defining for each source of display items, a candidate set of items to be displayed;

- Kurtzman, II et al. discloses a method in which a set of advertisements (items) is selected to be considered for display (column 2, lines 25-38 of Kurtzman, II et al.);
- inserting up to N of the selected items in the available display slots of the Web page;
 - Kurtzman, II et al. discloses a method in which the amount of advertisements requested is provided to complete the web page (column 2, lines 25-38 of Kurtzman, II et al.).
- selecting display items from a pool of all candidate sets of display items, in a manner that equalizes the probability that the display items of one source are selected in relation to display items of another source;
 - Kurtzman, II et al. does not disclose a method in which the selection is performed in a method that equalizes the probability that items in one source will be selected in relation to items of another. However, Langheinrich et al. discloses a method in which the manner of selection equalizes the chances of items being selected from any of the sources (column 7, line 60-column 8, line 18 of Langheinrich et al.). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time invention was made to have combined the methods of Kurtzman II et al. with the methods of Langheinrich because it would have allowed for equal opportunity for all ads to be shown.

7. **Regarding dependent claim 2,**

- periodically repeating the steps;
 - Kurtzman, II et al. discloses a method in which the process is performed on any web page request (periodically) (column 2, lines 25-38 of Kurtzman, II et al.).

8. Regarding dependent claim 3,

- defining a plurality of different levels of source participation, each source being associated with one level and each level having one or more sources associated with it;
 - Kurtzman, II et al. discloses a method in which the advertisements are divided into affinities (levels) (column 2, lines 25-38 of Kurtzman, II et al.);
- performing the steps separately for the sources at each level of participation, thereby selecting a number of display items at each level; and
 - Kurtzman, II et al. discloses a method in which engines are used to operate on each affinity separately, thus obtaining the best results at each affinity (column 2, 25-47 of Kurtzman, II et al.); and
- selecting a predefined number of display items from said selected items at each level and assigning the predefined number of display items of each level to respective display slots on the Web page in a manner that gives preference to one level of source participation relative to another;
 - Kurtzman, II et al. discloses a method in which advertisements are selected from the criteria of each affinity, and then the web page is filled in

with the advertisements in order of weightings (preference) of the different affinities (column 2, 25-47 of Kurtzman, II et al.).

9. **Regarding dependent claim 4,**

- assigning display slots that otherwise would have been assigned to the display items of that level instead to the display items at the highest other level of participation having available items to fill those slots;
 - Kurtzman, II et al. discloses a method in which if the highest preference affinity does not have enough items to cover the web pages needs the next highest affinity is used to cover the needs (Figure 4 of Kurtzman, II et al.).

10. **Regarding dependent claim 5,**

- filling the unfilled display slots with display items selected from sources outside of said predefined levels of source participation;
 - Kurtzman, II et al. discloses a method in which floating ads are used to fill in the display once there are no advertisements left in the predetermined affinities (column 23, lines 33-45 of Kurtzman, II et al.).

11. **Regarding dependent claim 6,**

- weighting the items in each candidate set to equalize the probability that items from any one candidate set will be selected from the pool of all candidate sets, thereby providing a equalized pool of candidate sets;
 - Kurtzman, II et al. disclose a method in which engines that process the weighted advertisement sets can channel their results through each other,

in order to find the best display items contained throughout all the sets, thus normalizing the selection process by giving all sets a chance (column 2, lines 38-47 of Kurtzman, II et al.); and

- randomly selecting said items from the normalized pool of candidate sets;
 - o Kurtzman, II et al. does not disclose randomly selecting an item from the overall set. However, Langheinrich et al. discloses a method in which an advertisement is randomly selected based on assigned weightings (column 8, lines 1-18 of Langheinrich et al.). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have combined the method of Kurtzman, II et al. with the method of Langheinrich et al. because it would have been more flexible by normalizing the selection process (bring the probability to 1.0).

12. Regarding dependent claim 7,

- Randomly selecting one of the candidate sets;
- selecting one item from the selected candidate set;
 - o Kurtzman, II et al. discloses a method in which an advertisement is selected from a list generated from a set (column 2, lines 38-47 of Kurtzman, II et al.);
- reducing a count of the display items of the selected candidate set by one and removing that candidate set from further consideration when the count reaches zero;

- Kurtzman, II et al. discloses a method advertisements are selected from a set and removed from consideration by decrementing a reference counter (column 14, lines 21-end of page of Kurtzman, II et al.), and once a set contains no items the set is removed from consideration and the next set is considered (Figure 4 of Kurtzman, II et al.); and
- repeating the steps until a desired number of display items have been selected;
 - Kurtzman, II et al. discloses a method in which the amount of advertisements requested are provided to complete the web page (column 2, lines 25-38 of Kurtzman, II et al.).
 - Kurtzman, II et al. does not disclose randomly selected a candidate set. Langheinrich et al. discloses a method a selection of advertisements is made randomly (column 8, lines 1-18 of Langheinrich et al.). Langheinrich et al. also discloses that it would increase performance to make selections by group rather than single advertisements (column 3, lines 33-36 of Langheinrich et al.). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have combined the method of Kurtzman, II et al. with the method of Langheinrich et al. because it would have been more flexible by normalizing the selection process (bring the probability to 1.0).

13. Regarding dependent claims 8 and 9,

- randomly selecting one item from the selected candidate set; and

- selecting one item from the selected candidate set in accordance with a weighting of items applied to the selected candidate set;
 - o Kurtzman, II et al. does not disclose randomly selecting an item from a set based on weighting. However, Langheinrich et al. discloses a method in which an advertisement is randomly selected from a set based on assigned weightings (column 8, lines 1-18 of Langheinrich et al.). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have combined the method of Kurtzman, II et al. with the method of Langheinrich et al. because it would have been more flexible by normalizing the selection process (bring the probability to 1.0).

14. **Regarding dependent claim 10,**

- defining, for each source of display items, a candidate set of items to be displayed, each candidate set of items having at least a first subset and a second subset, each subset having a count associated therewith of the number of display items in that subset, and wherein the steps are performed first on the first subset of display items until the count for that subset reaches zero, and then on the second subset; and
- the candidate set being removed from further consideration only after the counts of both subsets reach zero
 - o Kurtzman, II et al. discloses a method in which a set is broken down into multiple affinities (subsets) (column 2, lines 25-38 of Kurtzman, II et al.). Kurtzman, II et al. discloses a method advertisements are selected from

an affinity set and removed from consideration by decrementing a reference counter (column 14, lines 21-end of page of Kurtzman, II et al.), and once an affinity set contains no items the set is removed from consideration and the next affinity set is considered (Figure 4 of Kurtzman, II et al.).

15. Regarding dependent claim 11,

- two or more subsets, and wherein the steps are performed, in turn, on each successive subset until the counts of all of the subsets reach zero;
 - Kurtzman, II et al. discloses a method in which a set is broken down into multiple affinities (subsets) (column 2, lines 25-38 of Kurtzman, II et al.). Kurtzman, II et al. discloses a method advertisements are selected from an affinity set and removed from consideration by decrementing a reference counter (column 14, lines 21-end of page of Kurtzman, II et al.), and once an affinity set contains no items the set is removed from consideration and the next affinity set is considered, and then the next, and so on (Figure 4 of Kurtzman, II et al.).

16. Regarding independent claim 12 and dependent claims 13-22, the claims are the medium containing instructions that correlates to the method of claims 1-11. Thus, the claims are rejected along the same rationale as claims 1-11

17. Regarding independent claim 23 and dependent claims 24-32, the claims incorporate substantially similar subject matter as claims 1 and 3-11. Thus, the claims are rejected along the same rationale as claims 1 and 3-11.

Response to Arguments

18. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-32 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

19. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure:

US Patent Number 6,237,022

US Patent Number 6,385,592

US Patent Application Publication Number 2001/0034643

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Joshua D Campbell whose telephone number is (571) 272-4133. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F (8:00 AM - 4:30 PM).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Heather Herndon can be reached on (571) 272-4136. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.



Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

JDC
October 29, 2004



STEPHEN S. HONG
PRIMARY EXAMINER